

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress  
1st Session

Vote No. 157

June 8, 1999, 5:39 p.m.  
Page S-6678 Temp. Record

## DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS/CINC Support Aircraft

**SUBJECT:** Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000 . . . S. 1122. Stevens motion to table the Boxer/Harkin amendment No. 541.

### ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 66-31

**SYNOPSIS:** As reported, S. 1122, the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2000, will provide \$264.7 billion in new budget authority for the military functions of the Department of Defense, which is \$1.427 billion more than requested, \$6.594 billion more than provided last year (counting the supplemental amounts provided in May, 1999), and \$14.116 billion more than enacted in last year's defense appropriations bill. This \$264.7 billion does not include an additional \$5 billion (\$1.8 billion for fiscal year 2000 pay and pensions and \$3.1 billion for fiscal year 1999 readiness accounts) in previously approved emergency budget authority that will be available in fiscal year 2000. Initially, the bill had \$267.8 billion in new budget authority; that amount was reduced in section 3108 by \$3.1 billion so that budget authority on other appropriations bills could be increased without exceeding the caps. To stay within the committee allocation of \$263.9 billion for defense spending, certain spectrum sales will be accelerated to get offsets of approximately \$2 billion.

**The Boxer/Harkin amendment** would delete a provision giving the Secretary of the Air Force authority to negotiate leases for support aircraft. In lieu thereof, it would require a report to be issued by March 1, 2000, on the inventory and status of operational support aircraft, Commander-in-Chief (CINC) support aircraft, and command support aircraft of the Department of Defense. The report would include information on the present and foreseeable requirements for such aircraft, the cost of leasing such aircraft, commercial alternatives for such aircraft, the cost of maintaining such aircraft, the capability and appropriateness of such aircraft to fulfill mission requirements, and the relevancy of the aircrafts' missions to war-fighting requirements.

During debate, Senator Stevens moved to table the amendment. A motion to table is not debatable; however, some debate preceded the making of the motion. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

(See other side)

YEAS (66)			NAYS (31)		NOT VOTING (3)	
Republicans (48 or 91%)	Democrats (18 or 41%)		Republicans (5 or 9%)	Democrats (26 or 59%)	Republicans (2)	Democrats (1)
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Akaka	Abraham	Baucus	Crapo <sup>-2</sup>	Biden <sup>-4</sup>
Bennett	Inhofe	Breaux	Allard	Bayh	McCain <sup>-2</sup>	
Bond	Jeffords	Bryan	Grams	Bingaman		
Brownback	Kyl	Cleland	Grassley	Boxer		
Bunning	Lott	Dodd	Santorum	Byrd		
Burns	Lugar	Dorgan		Conrad		
Campbell	Mack	Hollings		Daschle		
Chafee	McConnell	Inouye		Durbin		
Cochran	Murkowski	Kennedy		Edwards		
Collins	Nickles	Kerrey		Feingold		
Coverdell	Roberts	Kerry		Feinstein		
Craig	Roth	Landrieu		Graham		
DeWine	Sessions	Leahy		Harkin		
Domenici	Shelby	Lieberman		Johnson		
Enzi	Smith, Bob	Moynihan		Kohl		
Fitzgerald	Smith, Gordon	Murray		Lautenberg		
Frist	Snowe	Reed		Levin		
Gorton	Specter	Reid		Lincoln		
Gramm	Stevens			Mikulski		
Gregg	Thomas			Robb		
Hagel	Thompson			Rockefeller		
Hatch	Thurmond			Sarbanes		
Helms	Voinovich			Schumer		
Hutchinson	Warner			Torricelli		
				Wellstone		
				Wyden		

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

**Those favoring** the motion to table contended:

The Boxer/Harkin amendment would restrict the authority of the Department of Defense (DoD) to lease support aircraft for military commanders. Proponents of this amendment believe that it would save money. Exactly the opposite would occur. Forcing the military to use old support aircraft would make it spend \$250 million more on transport for our CINC commanders over the next 10 years than it would have to spend if it were allowed to lease new planes. Further, for reasons of effectiveness and national security, relying on our fleet of 30- 35-year-old support aircraft would be unwise. Our colleagues have suggested that before we give this authority to lease we ought to have a study, but we have already had a study. They also suggest that we ought to consider a policy of pooling support aircraft instead of leasing aircraft, but we already have such a policy. Our colleagues suggestions are really just delaying tactics. There is no valid reason why we should not give the DoD this authority.

The first point our colleagues need to understand is that this bill will not mandate any particular decision regarding support aircraft. If our colleagues look closely at the provision of the bill which has been called into question, they will find that it merely authorizes leasing from available funds. Therefore, the proposed amendment would have no effect whatsoever on total spending--all it would do is pull authority away from decision-makers in our military. Further, we note that nothing in the authority to lease would require the military, if it did lease, to lease Gulfstream V aircraft (as our colleagues have implied) or any other particular type of aircraft. The DoD would exercise its judgment without micromanaging from Congress.

Our colleagues have suggested that using existing support aircraft would be cheaper than leasing new aircraft, and in particular that it would be cheaper than leasing Gulfstream V aircraft. They are either misinformed or misconstruing the facts. Leasing would save taxpayer dollars, because the military is finding it extremely costly to maintain its current support fleet of 30- to 35-year-old Boeing 707s. In fact, the DoD currently projects the cost of maintaining these jets to be \$750 million over the next 10 years, which is a quarter of a billion dollars more than it estimates it would cost to lease new jets to meet CINC travel requirements. New planes are smaller and more efficient, and require fewer staff, so they have a lower per-person transport cost. It is also important to note the planes are new at the beginning of the lease and are returned at the end of the lease, which creates the opportunity for the leasing of new and improved equipment at the beginning of each leasing period. Our colleagues have noted correctly that it would be cheaper to buy new support aircraft than it would be to lease them for 10 years, but what they have not mentioned is that we do not have room in our budget for that option. Leasing would allow us to spread the costs out over 10 years.

Proponents of this amendment have also questioned the need for Gulfstream aircraft in a military that already has hundreds of planes capable of traveling long distances quickly. What they have failed to mention is that, as a result of the current Administration's propensity to use military force, we now have troops stationed in 91 different countries. With our forces so spread out, our CINCs need the ability to fly from base to base without delays for refueling and maintenance. Some Senators have also suggested that we should just make our 4-star generals book flights on commercial airliners. We strongly disagree. Hostile countries and terrorists would then target them for assassination or kidnapping. Further, the lives of other passengers would be put at risk. We inform our colleagues that under current circumstances CINCs sometimes have no alternative but to travel on commercial airliners, largely because many of our support planes cannot land at a great number of foreign airfields. When our CINCs take commercial flights, they must travel in civilian attire and they are restricted in the work that they can do while in-flight. This situation is both dangerous and inefficient, and it should be remedied.

Instead of giving the DoD authority to fix the problem, our colleagues want a study. They want to have a comparison of the costs of leasing and the costs of operating the current aging fleet, and they want to know if a new policy of pooling military support aircraft could meet CINC needs. However, a study has already been done that compares the costs, and that study has found that leasing would save \$250 million over 10 years. Further, a policy of pooling military support aircraft is already in place, and that policy is not taking care of current problems. We do not favor taking away discretion from the DoD to choose the most cost-effective option for providing support aircraft for military commanders, nor do we favor making it perform useless studies. Therefore, we support the motion to table this amendment.

**Those opposing** the motion to table contended:

Year after year the Senate engages in spirited debate on proposals to cut spending, and many very difficult cuts have been made. Now, though, we are being asked to lease a fleet of luxury jets to squire about our top military brass. The bill does not say exactly what types of jets will be leased, but the Air Force has very candidly told us that it plans on leasing top-of-the-line Gulfstream V aircraft. We think that in this era of tight budgets it is absolutely unconscionable to waste money in this fashion. We have no idea why the Pentagon would make this proposal--it has hundreds of military aircraft on which commanders can fly, including a fleet of 150 commuter jets. Our military commanders do not need to fly extravagantly; they just need to fly. Amazingly, over the next 10 years, the cost of leasing these aircraft would be nearly half a billion dollars, which is \$145 million more than it would cost to purchase them outright. Currently, we have military families on food stamps and we have a need to spend more money on programs such as the Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Feeding Program (WIC). We should be spending more on those types of needs rather than on pampering 4-star generals. It is time for accountability, and that is what this amendment demands. We urge our colleagues to support it.